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Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 29 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention a statement on the European Union Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts issued on 15 June 2001 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 10, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pierre **Schori**
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Annex to the letter dated 29 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

European Union Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts

1. The international community has a political and moral responsibility to act to avoid the human suffering and the destruction of resources caused by violent conflicts. The European Union is a successful example of conflict prevention, based on democratic values and respect for human rights, justice and solidarity, economic prosperity and sustainable development. The process of enlargement will extend this community of peace and progress to a wider circle of European states.

2. In line with the fundamental values of the EU, the highest political priority will be given to improving the effectiveness and coherence of its external action in the field of conflict prevention, thereby also enhancing the preventive capabilities of the international community at large.

3. Conflict prevention calls for a co-operative approach to facilitate peaceful solutions to disputes and implies addressing the root-causes of conflicts. It is an important element of all aspects of the external relations of the European Union. The development of ESDP has, since the outset, been intended to strengthen the EU's capacity for action in the crucial field of conflict prevention.

4. In keeping with the primary role of the UN in conflict prevention, EU actions will be undertaken in accordance with the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. Recalling that the main responsibility for conflict prevention rests with the parties concerned, assistance to local and regional capacity building according to principles of local ownership is of particular importance.

5. The European Union, through this programme, underlines its political commitment to pursue conflict prevention as one of the main objectives of the EU's external relations. It resolves to continue to improve its capacity to prevent violent conflicts and to contribute to a global culture of prevention. The Commission communication on conflict prevention is welcomed as a major contribution to EU capabilities for conflict prevention.

6. The EU will:

- set clear political priorities for preventive actions,
- improve its early warning, action and policy coherence,
- enhance its instruments for long- and short-term prevention, and
- build effective partnerships for prevention.

I. Political priorities for preventive actions

7. Successful conflict prevention relies on preparedness to take action before a situation deteriorates into violence. Development of policy options must start with clear political priorities and direction, set out through regular reviews of potential conflict areas.

8. In order to **set clear political priorities for preventive actions**:

- the Council will schedule a broad consideration of potential conflict issues at the outset of each Presidency, including at the time of the yearly orientation debate, prepared with assistance from the High Representative, relevant Council bodies, including the Political and Security Committee (PSC), and the Commission, to identify priority areas and regions for EU preventive actions;
- the Council will pursue coherent and comprehensive preventive strategies, using appropriate existing instruments and taking into account ongoing actions, in order to identify challenges, set clear objectives, allocate adequate resources and ensure co-operation with external partners;
- the implementation of preventive strategies will be monitored by the Council, drawing on contributions from the Secretary General/High Representative (SG/HR) and the Commission;

- the Commission is invited to implement its proposal on strengthening the conflict prevention elements in the Country Strategy Papers, as stipulated in the Council conclusions on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), i.a. through more systematic analyses of potential conflict situations.

II. **Early warning, action and policy coherence**

9. Successful prevention must be based on accurate information and analysis as well as clear options for action for both long- and short-term prevention. It requires enhanced field co-operation. Coherence must be ensured in early warning, analysis, planning, decision-making, implementation and evaluation.

10. In order to ensure **early warning, action and policy coherence**:

- Coreper will continue to ensure coherence between different policy areas of the Union, paying specific attention to the question of coherent preventive activities;
- the PSC will further strengthen its role in developing and monitoring conflict prevention policies within the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the ESDP, building upon information from relevant bodies, and bringing issues to the attention of the Council;
- Member States, their Heads of Mission, EU Special Representatives, EC delegations and other representatives of the Commission, as well as the Council Secretariat, including the Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit (PPEWU) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS), should provide regular information on developments of potential conflict situations, i.a. through the development and use of standard formats and methods for early warning reports;
- full use will be made of information from field based personnel of the UN and the OSCE, as well as other international organisations and civil society;
- increased exchange of information between the Member States and the Commission is encouraged, i.a. through exchange of Country Strategy Papers and respective strategy documents of Member States, as well as through the establishment of a system of exchange of information at working level under development by the Commission;
- full use will be made of the Guidelines for strengthening operational co-ordination between the Community, represented by the Commission, and the Member States in the field of external assistance, adopted by the Council on 22 January 2001.

III. **EU instruments for long- and short-term prevention**

11. The Union has an extensive set of instruments for structural long-term and direct short-term preventive actions. The long-term instruments include development co-operation, trade, arms control, human rights and environment policies as well as political dialogue. The Union also has a broad range of diplomatic and humanitarian instruments for short-term prevention. Structures and capabilities for civil and military crisis management, developed within the framework of the ESDP, will also contribute to the capabilities of the EU to prevent conflicts.

12. It must use these instruments in a more targeted and effective manner in order to address root-causes of conflict such as poverty, lack of good governance and respect for human rights, and competition for scarce natural resources.

13. To **strengthen EU instruments for long- and short-term prevention**:

- all relevant institutions of the Union will mainstream conflict prevention within their areas of competence, taking into account the recommendations made in the Commission communication on conflict prevention;
- the Commission is invited to implement its recommendations on ensuring that its development policy and other co-operation programmes are more clearly focused on

addressing root-causes of conflicts in an integrated way within the framework of the poverty reduction objective;
- EU's political dialogue will be used in a systematic and targeted way to address potential conflicts and promote conflict prevention;
- the Commission, taking into account the Council conclusions on EU electoral assistance and observation of 31 May 2001, is invited to implement its recommendations on more targeted action in support of democracy, and the particular attention paid to support to electoral processes, including electoral observers, administration of justice, improving police services and human rights training for the whole security sector, as means of contributing to conflict prevention;
- the capacities of the Union will, as needs are identified, be strengthened by developing instruments in areas such as expertise on human rights and democracy, fact-finding missions, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DD&R), and demining;
- the Council will examine how instruments for disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, including Confidence and Security Building Measures, can be used more systematically for preventive purposes, including as means for early warning and post-conflict stabilisation and as element in the political dialogue, whilst avoiding duplication of the activities of regional and international organisations;
- the EU will support the ratification and implementation of agreements to tackle the problem posed by unregulated spread of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, including the proposed UN Programme of Action;
- Member States and the Commission will tackle the illicit trade in high-value commodities, including by taking forward work to identify ways of breaking the link between rough diamonds and violent conflicts and through support for the Kimberly process;
- the Council will develop proposals on the further improvement of its diplomatic instruments, i.a. on the more effective use of Special Representatives, and to this end draw on contributions from the SG/HR;
- the Council, assisted by the SG/HR, and the Commission will, within their areas of competence, examine how to use the crisis management capabilities more effectively for preventive purposes.

IV. Co-operation and partnerships

14. The EU must build and sustain mutually reinforcing and effective partnerships for prevention with the UN, the OSCE and other international and regional organisations as well as the civil society. Increased co-operation is needed at all levels, from early warning and analysis to action and evaluation. Field co-ordination is of particular importance. EU action should be guided by principles of value added and comparative advantage.

15. In order to **increase co-operation and build effective partnerships**:
- The EU will intensify its exchange of information and practical co-operation with the UN system, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, other regional and subregional organisations and the international financial institutions, making full use of recent work on intensified EU-UN and EU-OSCE co-operation in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management;
- in accordance with the principles agreed at Feira and Nice, the EU and NATO, in developing their co-operation in crisis management, notably in the Western Balkans, will also increasingly contribute to conflict prevention;
- exchange of information, dialogue and practical co-operation with humanitarian actors such as the ICRC, relevant non-governmental and academic organisations should also be strengthened;

- the Union and its Member States will, in accordance with article 19 of the Treaty of the European Union, co-ordinate their action to promote conflict prevention in international organisations where they are members;
- joint training programmes for EU, UN and OSCE field and headquarters personnel should be developed, benefiting from the Commission's willingness to consider funding of such programmes;
- the EU will invite organisations involved in conflict prevention in Europe to a meeting on how to improve preventive capabilities, in order to contribute to the dialogue on peace-building initiated by the UN Secretary-General;
- the Union should also contribute to the strengthening of preventive capacities of regional and subregional organisations outside Europe, i.a. through the Commission recommendation on support to regional and subregional integration and, in particular organisations with a clear conflict prevention mandate;
- methods for EU co-operation with the private sector in the field of conflict prevention will be developed, drawing i.a. on progress made by the UN Global Partnership, the OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises and the G8.

V. Implementation

16. The EU and its Member States share the responsibility to implement this programme. Future Presidencies are invited to promote this implementation and make recommendations on its further development. The Commission is invited to implement the recommendations made in its communication on conflict prevention, within its area of competence. Members States are encouraged to develop national action plans to increase their capabilities for conflict prevention.

17. The first report on the progress made in implementation of this programme should be submitted by the Presidency to the European Council in Seville.